

## **South Carolinians Eat More Fresh Veggies and Fruits Thanks to Farmer's Market**

### ***Issue***

Every Thursday morning for seven weeks during the summer of 2008, Mr. German Glasscho, an independent farmer from Cades, S.C., rose before dawn and loaded his white pickup truck full of blueberries, butter beans, honeydew melon, collard greens, zucchini, and other farm-fresh vegetables and fruits. Throughout June and July, Mr. Glasscho made this weekly trip from rural South Carolina to sell his seasonal vegetables and fruits to the city folk in Columbia. Although locals eagerly anticipated his arrival each week, evidence suggests that the average South Carolinian does not eat enough vegetables and fruits. In fact, only one in five S.C. adults eats at least five servings each day, according to the 2007 S.C. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. It has been found that those who consume more servings of vegetables and fruits have, on average, reduced risk of chronic disease than those who eat less generous amounts.

### ***Intervention***

The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant has enabled the South Carolina's Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) to help run initiatives such as the farmer's market which promote consumption of vegetables and fruits directly to the state's residents. DHEC has teamed with the Seeds of Hope Farmers Market program, which offers local farms' products within an urban setting. This program allows patrons to boost their vegetable and fruit intake by providing access to fresh, locally grown food. Among the strategies used to promote vegetable and fruit consumption:

- The market was placed in the parking lot of a busy office block with a retirement community nearby, giving office workers and seniors access to farm-fresh produce;
- Recipes featuring vegetables and fruits offered at the market were distributed free of charge, as well as information on other farmer's markets in South Carolina; and
- A drawing for a free canvas tote bag bearing the "Fruits and Veggies-More Matters®" logo was held each week to encourage patrons' use of the market on a weekly basis as well as reinforcing the new national "Fruits and Veggies-More Matters®" promotional initiative.

### ***Impact***

Mr. Glasscho's market attracted up to 200 people in a single morning with the average spent per person totaling around \$9. This is an impressive amount considering eggplants sold for 50 cents each and peaches averaged \$1 a pound. Other results included:

- A survey of Mr. Glasscho's market patrons showed that 57 percent felt they ate more vegetables and fruits since they began shopping at the market;
- 100 percent were satisfied with the produce available at the market;
- Many seniors from the nearby retirement community used their USDA-issued Senior Farmer's Market vouchers; approximately 50 vouchers were used over the course of the market's seven-week run; and
- Comments from patrons included: "Awesome food!" "Delicious!" "Great prices!"

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